

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

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**Subject:** Scientific Integrity

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to establish the Bureau of Reclamation policy on the integrity of science and scholarship it uses for decision making. Scientific and scholarly information must be robust, of the highest quality, and the result of best possible scientific and scholarly processes when considered for decision making within Reclamation. Most importantly, users must be able to trust the information. The benefit of this Policy is the establishment of uniform requirements for Reclamation managers and employees when they conduct and manage scientific activities.

**Authority:** 74 Federal Register 10671 (March 11, 2009) *Presidential Memorandum on Scientific Integrity* dated March 9, 2009; 65 Federal Register 76262 (December 6, 2000) *Federal Policy on Research Misconduct*; Series 5, Department Manual 305 DM 3 *Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities* (January 28, 2011); Series 5, 370 DM 752 (December 22, 2006) *Discipline and Adverse Actions*

**Approving Official:** Commissioner

**Contact:** Scientific Integrity Officer (91-10000)

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1. **Introduction.** This Policy establishes Reclamation-specific responsibilities and requirements of 305 DM 3 for Reclamation employees who engage in scientific and scholarly activities or use scientific and scholarly information in decision making. This Policy will:
  - A. increase awareness of the importance of scientific and scholarly to maintain and enhance our effectiveness in fulfilling our, program requirements and other Federal mandates, and in establishing credibility and value with the public, both nationally and internationally;
  - B. assist employees in performing their duties with excellence and professionalism and in avoiding misconduct or the perception of misconduct when performing their duties;
  - C. ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that information Reclamation produces through scientific and scholarly activities is reliable, objective, replicable, transparent, and available; and
  - D. increase employees' confidence that their scientific and scholarly information will be used ethically and responsibly by ensuring decision makers do not intentionally misconstrue, misrepresent or inappropriately edit scientific or scholarly products.

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

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### 2. **Applicability.**

- A. This Policy establishes requirements for the professional conduct and management of scientific and scholarly activities, and the use of scientific and scholarly information by and on behalf of Reclamation. The scope of this Policy is established in 305 DM 3.
- B. This Policy and associated responsibilities and requirements are in effect beginning on the date of release. This Policy contains no requirements to revisit scientific or scholarly activities that have been completed or final decisions made using scientific information. Scientific or scholarly activities and associated decisions that are being conducted or developed as of the date of this release shall be consistent with this Policy.

### 3. **Definitions.** 305 DM 3 includes all relevant definitions.

### 4. **Responsibilities.**

- A. **Department Manual 305 EM 3.** See 305 DM 3 for additional, relevant definitions.
- B. **Deputy Ethics Counselor.** Reclamation's Deputy Ethics Counselor is responsible for coordinating with the Bureau Scientific Integrity Officer and managers/supervisors as requested, to ensure compliance with this Policy.

### 5. **Policy.** Reclamation will comply with all the provisions and requirements in 305 DM 3 regarding the Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities. Allegations of scientific and scholarly misconduct with respect to Reclamation employees, volunteers, contractors, cooperators, partners, permittees, leasees, and grantees will also be handled in accordance with the 305 DM 3.

### 6. **Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct.** 305 DM 3 includes the code of scientific and scholarly conduct.

### 7. **Uncertainty in Scientific Activities.** Employees who engage in scientific activities must:

- A. explicitly recognize and to the extent possible quantify the uncertainty inherent in, and limitations on, scientific data, analysis, and understanding;
- B. thoroughly articulate the assumptions upon which any scientific analysis and professional scientific opinion are premised; and
- C. be forthright and honest about uncertainties and limitations associated with the research used for developing possible policy options, or when making agency decisions, and acknowledge the uncertainties associated with any resulting prediction of consequences for water and related resources.

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

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8. **Maintaining Scientific Professionalism.** To the best of their abilities, employees who engage in scientific activities must:
  - A. objectively consider constructive criticism of their scientific activities and reports;
  - B. participate in appropriate peer reviews;
  - C. review and critique the work of others in a respectful and objective manner and substantiate review comments with factual evidence;
  - D. obtain and maintain any professional registrations or licensure as required by law, Reclamation Manual (RM) Policy, or RM Directives and Standards (D&Ss), including RM D&S, *Professional Registration for Engineers and Architects* (HRM 05-01), and as may be required by the position description which the employee performs his/her duties;
  - E. regularly pursue additional education, training, and professional development; and
  - F. keep current with scientific literature commensurate with his/her role as scientist or decision maker.
9. **Use of Scientific Information.** Decision makers utilizing scientific analysis will not suppress or alter scientific findings or conclusions, and will, to the extent permitted by law, be transparent in their use of scientific information in policymaking. Managers who are responsible for preparation of scientific documents or who make decisions based upon scientific studies will strive to ensure that:
  - A. the resources allocated to scientific studies and analyses are sufficient and appropriate to the significance of the issues addressed;
  - B. any established quality assurance/quality controls (QA/QC) and peer review procedures or requirements are followed to ensure the integrity and soundness of the information provided;
  - C. reports or decision documents accurately reflect the science provided by Reclamation or acquired elsewhere;
  - D. such documents represent, to the extent possible, the relative certainty or limitations associated with the scientific information; and
  - E. the scientists they manage are not subject to inappropriate attempts to influence the results or representations of the scientific studies, or to deter them from carrying out the studies they have been directed to undertake.

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

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10. **Accountability and Documentation.** Employees who engage in scientific activities must:
- A. be diligent in the creation, use, preservation, documentation, and maintenance of collections and data records;
  - B. adhere to established QA/QC programs;
  - C. follow RM D&S, *Information Management* (RCD 05-01) for records retention;
  - D. comply with Federal laws and established agreements, and RM Policy and D&S related to the use, security, and release of sensitive and proprietary data; particularly RM D&Ss, *Identifying and Safeguarding For Official Use Only (FOUO) Information* (SLE 02-01) and RCD 05-01; and
  - E. provide relevant contractors and volunteers working on behalf of Reclamation with a copy of this Policy and inform them that they must conduct their scientific activities in accordance with this Policy.
11. **Violations.** 305 DM 3 describes the process to handle allegations of scientific or scholarly misconduct. Verified violations of the requirements in this Policy will be treated as a finding(s) of scientific or other misconduct (see Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 65 Federal Register 76262, December 6, 2000). Disciplinary actions against Reclamation employees will be in accordance with Series 15, 370 DM 752.